



City of Grand Rapids, Michigan

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ROSALYNN C. BLISS
MAYOR

October 3, 2017

The Honorable Representative Brandt Iden, Chair, and Members of the House Regulatory Reform Committee
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Iden and Members of the House Regulatory Reform Committee:

The City of Grand Rapids supports HB 4504 to codify the "Half-Mile Rule" for Specially Designated Distributor (SDD) liquor licenses. The City recently indicated opposition to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission's (MLCC) decision to rescind this rule in a letter to the commission dated September 8, 2017. That letter is enclosed for your consideration.

The City agrees with the sponsor, the Honorable Representative Michael Webber, that this important public policy decision should be made by the Legislature and addressed in statute. The "Half-Mile Rule" has provided protection for our urban neighborhoods and prevented multiple outlets from co-locating in close proximity to one another, thereby limiting the amount of businesses saturating a neighborhood. Quality-of-life impacts such as loitering, litter, noise and personal safety – real and perceived – can be difficult to manage. A concentration of outlets would be detrimental, particularly in communities that are already vulnerable.

The MLCC's role is important in maintaining the stability of our local business districts and neighborhoods. Local issues surrounding race, poverty and geography often come into play in discussions about SDD outlets. Furthermore, the MLCC's guiding philosophy "to make alcoholic beverages available while regulating their sale and distribution in order to protect the rights and interests of Michigan citizens" clearly applies. Numerous neighborhood associations and citizens have spoken that the current rule is clear and consistent, and the City of Grand Rapids supports the codification of this long-standing policy.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact Suzanne Schulz, Managing Director of Design, Development and Community Engagement for the City of Grand Rapids at ssschulz@grcity.us or our Legislative Manager, Karyn Ferrick, at kferrick@grcity.us.

Sincerely,

Rosalynn Bliss

Enclosure

CC: Members of the Senate Regulatory Reform Committee
James Miller, Governmental Consultant Services, Inc.
Bob DeVries, Governmental Consultant Services, Inc.